



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2007

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WEST NILE VIRUS GETS AN EARLY START *Virus Continues to Spread Throughout San Diego County*

County Vector Control officials announced today that another dead crow found in the Del Mar Heights area tested positive for West Nile virus. This is the third bird to test positive this year.

"This is very early in the season to have so many positive West Nile virus results," said Gary Erbeck, director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "In past years, we haven't seen this much activity until June or July."

Backyard water sources such as unused swimming pools, ponds, fountains and horse troughs are ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Mosquito fish, which are available for free at 13 locations around the County, may be used to control mosquito breeding in backyard water sources.

The public continues to be helpful in reporting suspect cases to Vector Control. Vector Control staff continues to pick up and test dead crows, ravens, jays, hawks, and owls that are reported. Call Vector Control for instructions on how to deal with the bird. Dead birds do not need to be reported if: they have been dead more than 24 hours; have been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals; or are covered with ants or flies; have a foul odor; or if their bodies are not intact.

To report dead birds, mosquito breeding areas, inoperative swimming pools, or standing water, please call County Vector Control at 858-694-2888.

You can protect yourself from the virus by staying inside when mosquitoes are most active and by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dawn or dusk. You should use insect repellent containing DEET when you are outdoors. Keep screens on doors and windows and make sure the screens are in good condition.

To date, seven California counties are reporting cases of West Nile virus. There have been no human cases of WNV reported in California this year.

For more information about the West Nile virus, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the County's West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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